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(54) **BOTTLE WITH EXTENDED NECK FINISH
AND METHOD OF MAKING SAME**

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See application file for complete search history.

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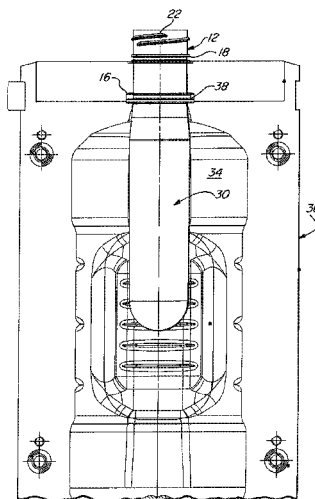
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ABSTRACT

A blow molded synthetic resin bottle has a body and an elongated neck with the body providing a shoulder extending about the base of the neck. The neck has a first collar extending thereabout spaced adjacent the shoulder and at least one additional collar extending thereabout adjacent the upper end of the neck. The resin in the neck is substantially unoriented. To produce the bottle, a synthetic resin preform is injection molded with a generally tubular body and the elongated neck. This preform is placed in a blow mold cavity having a body receiving portion and a neck receiving portion that has a recess extending thereabout seating the first collar therein. The additional collar is disposed outwardly of the mold cavity and is disposed on the upper surface of the mold.

25 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



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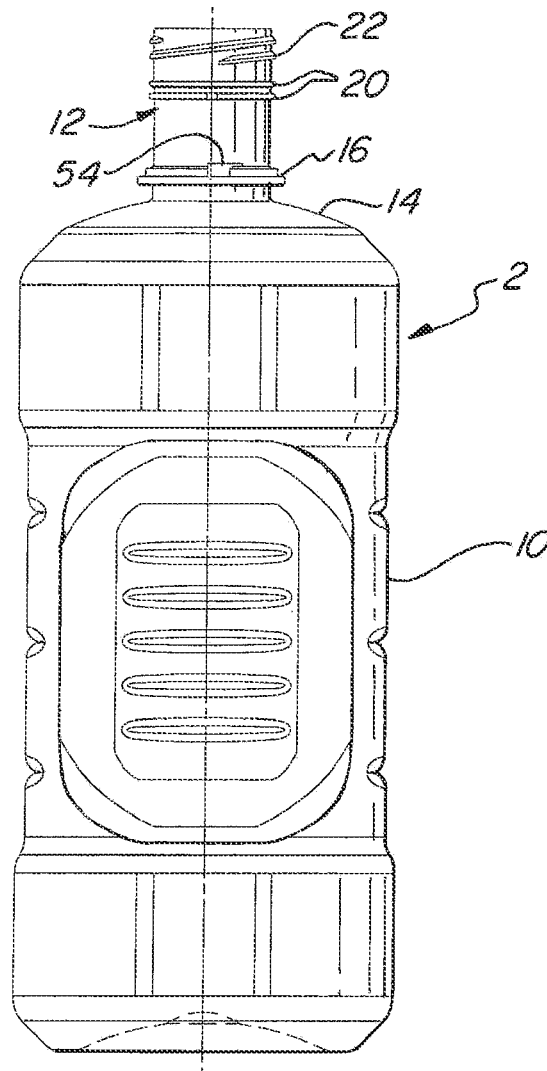


FIG. 1

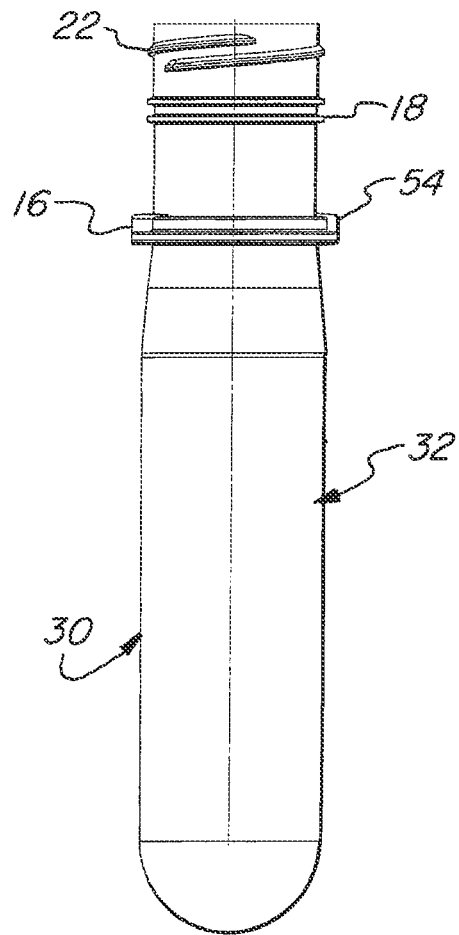
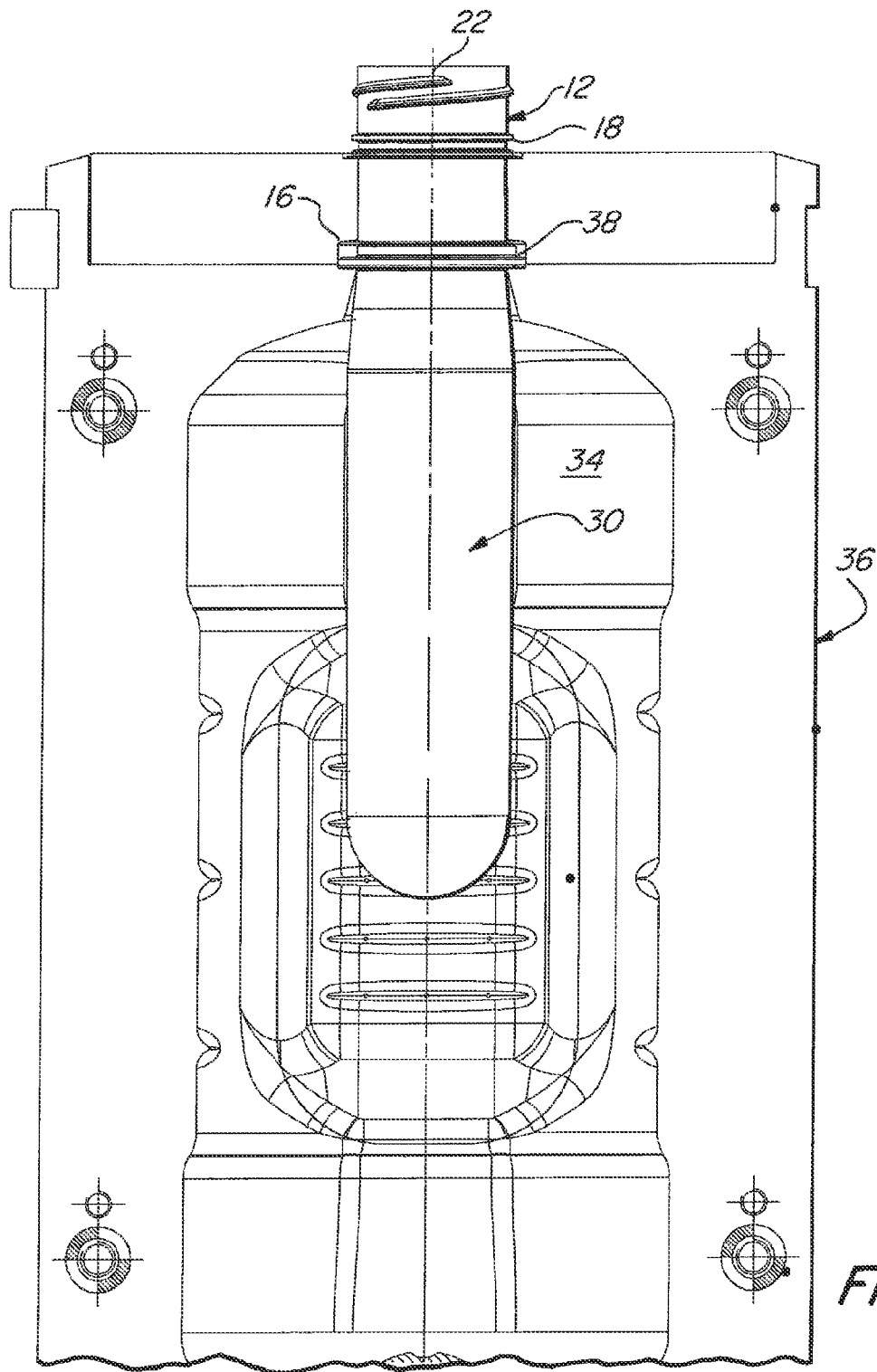


FIG. 2



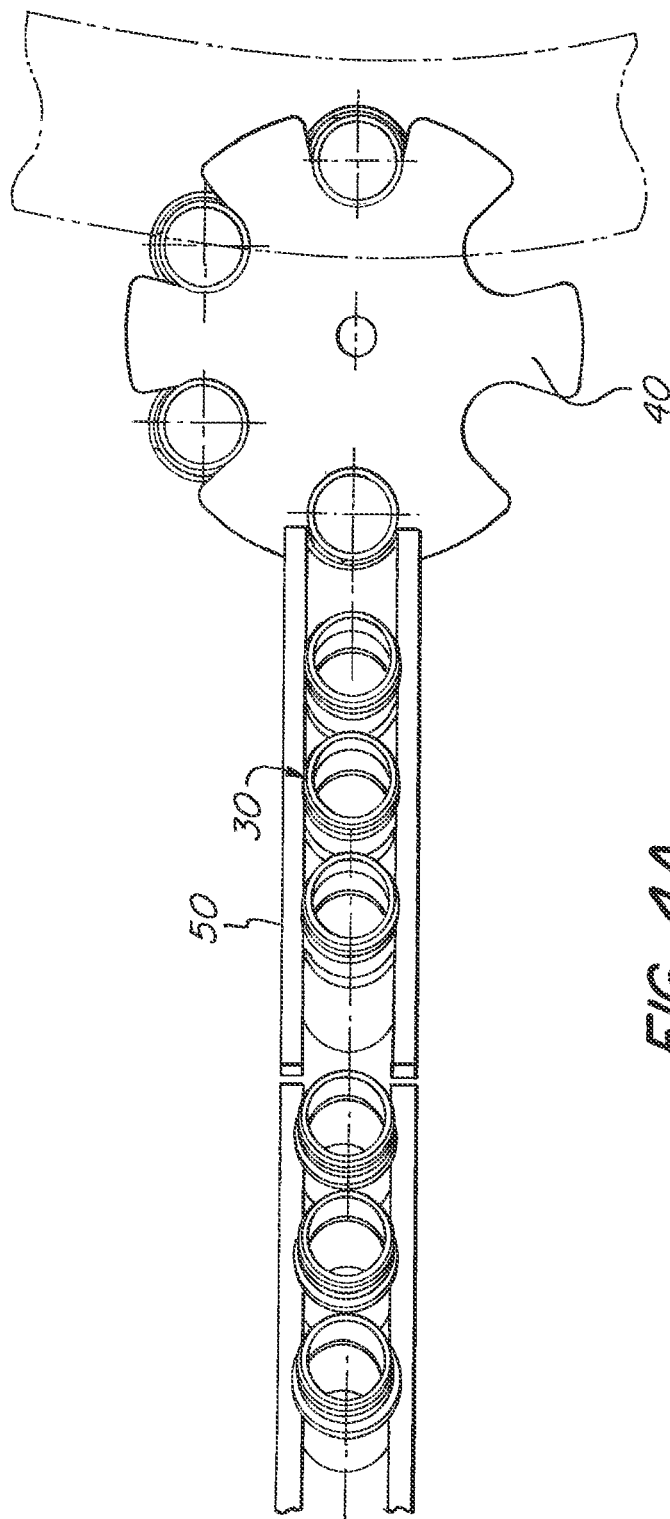
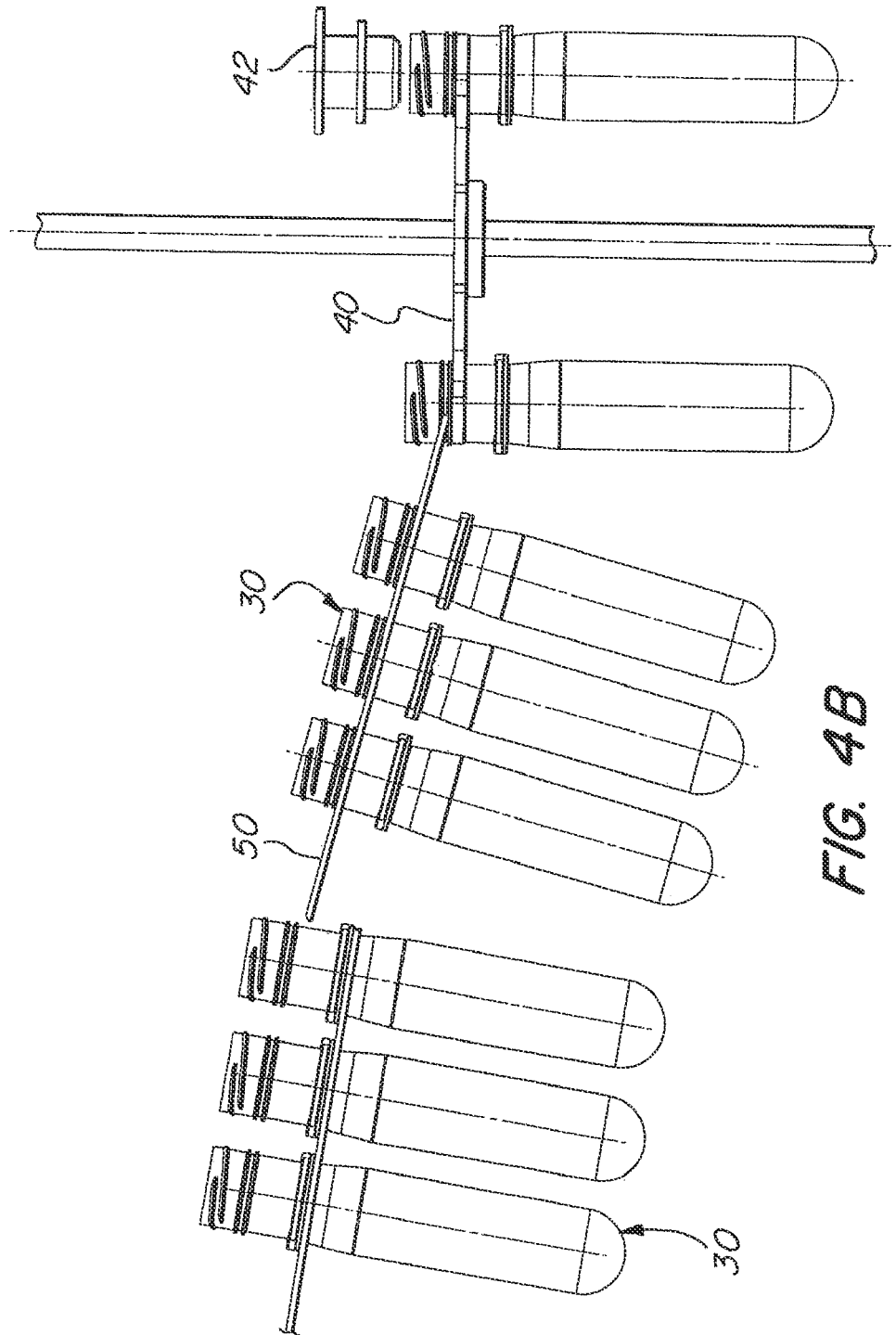


FIG. 4A



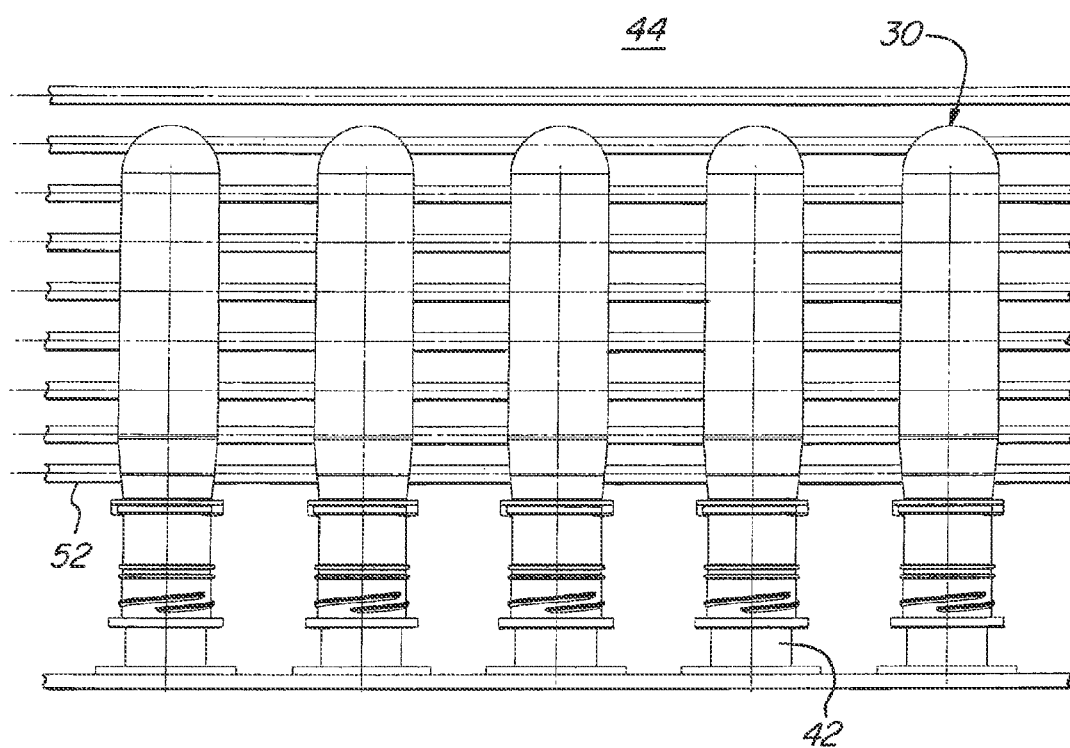
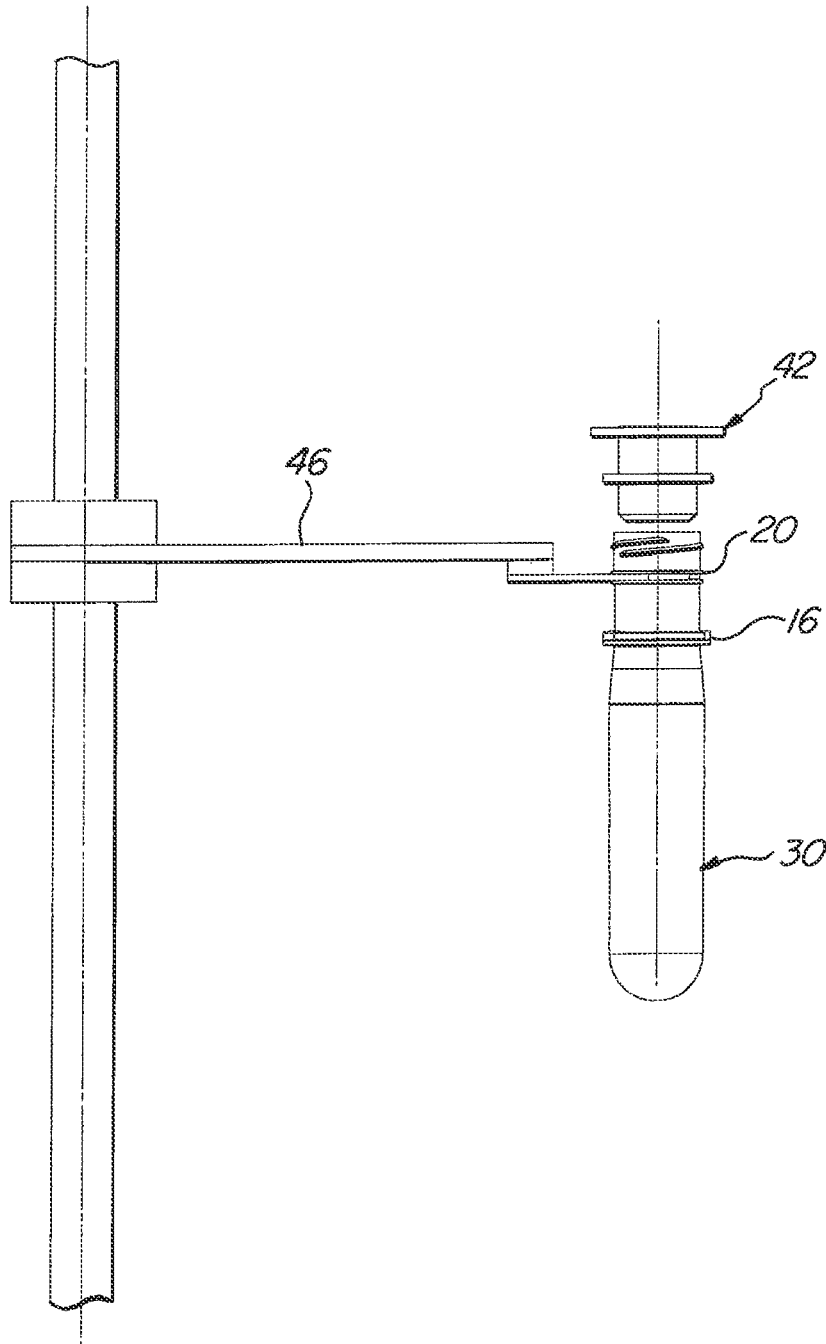


FIG. 5

*FIG. 6*

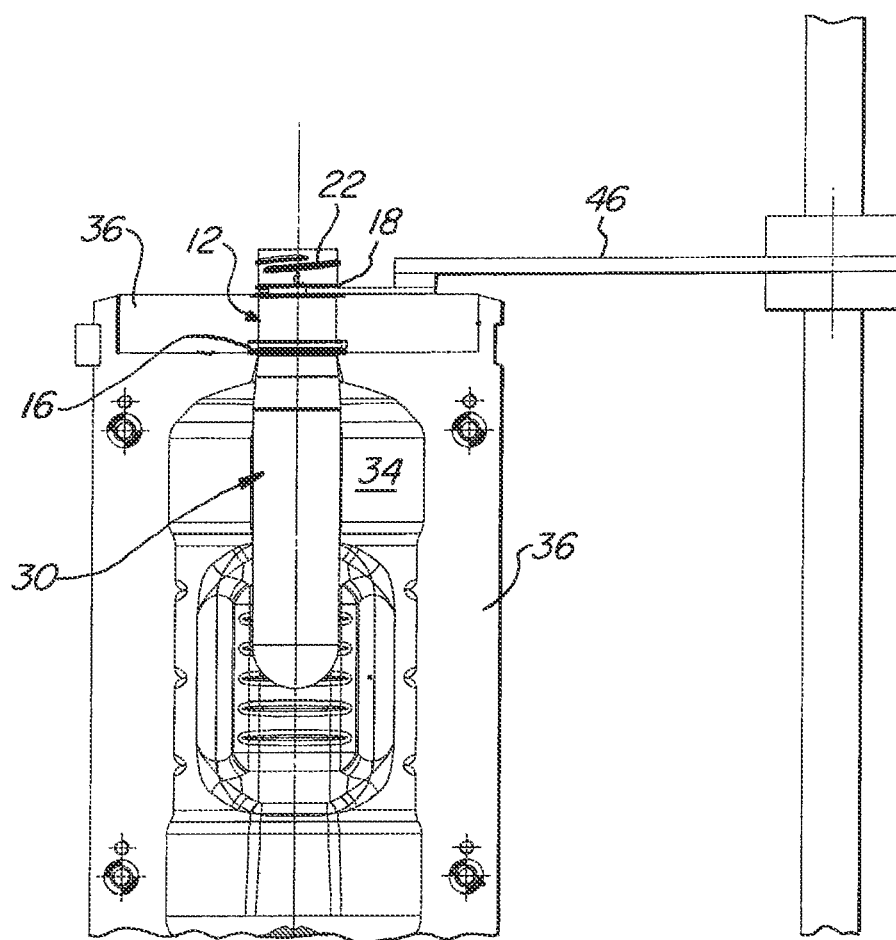


FIG. 7

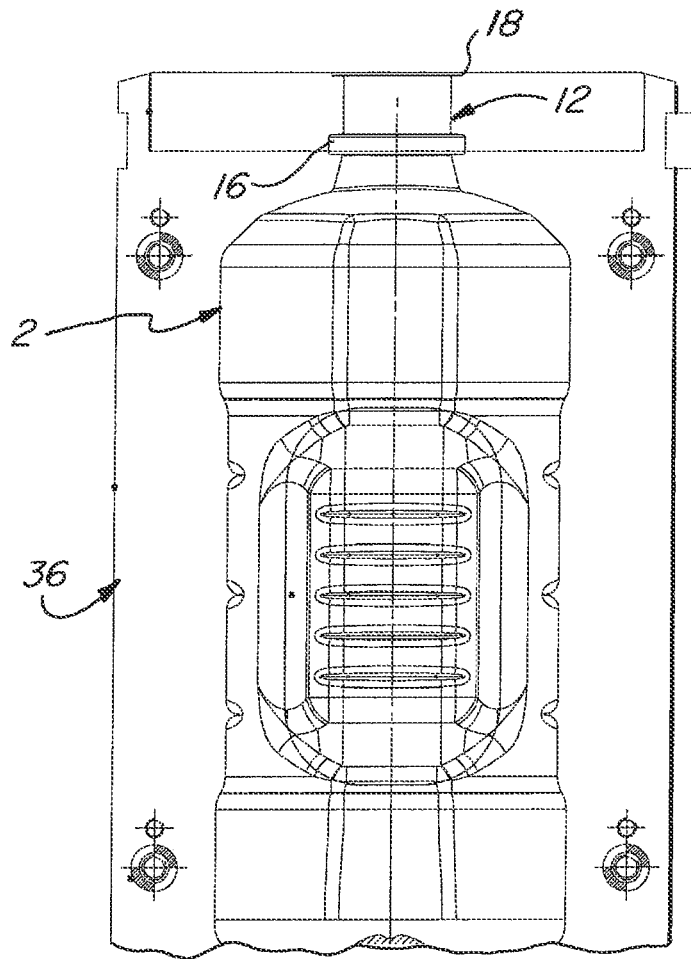


FIG. 8

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BOTTLE WITH EXTENDED NECK FINISH AND METHOD OF MAKING SAME

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of prior U.S. application Ser. No. 12/328,696, filed Dec. 4, 2008, which is a divisional of prior application Ser. No. 11/075,932, filed Mar. 8, 2005, which are incorporated herein by reference in their entireties.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to blow molded bottles having an elongated neck finish and to a method for making same.

Blow molded synthetic resin bottles generally have a body and a neck finish to receive a closure. They are produced in molds by blowing a heated injection molded preform outwardly against the walls of a mold cavity.

When the resin of the preform is orientable, the blow molding of the preform outwardly, both radially and longitudinally, against the walls defining the mold cavity produces orientation of the molecules of the resin. However, it is desirable to have the mold cavity snugly seat the neck finish so that it retains its molded dimensions and unoriented structure.

For some applications, bottles with neck finishes of substantial length are desired and this can produce problems when using standard automated equipment. The clearance above the mold may be limited so as to preclude the conventional preform neck finish having a positioning and gripping collar adjacent its lower end which seats on the outer surface of the mold. The preform is generally deposited in the mold cavity by a gripper which engages the collar on the neck finish and that collar seats on the upper surface of the mold to position the preform properly within the mold cavity.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a novel synthetic resin bottle having an extended neck finish.

It is also an object to provide such a bottle which can be readily fabricated in existing blow molding equipment.

Another object is to provide a novel method for making synthetic resin blow molded bottles with extended neck finishes.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It has now been found that the foregoing and related objects may be attained in a blow molded synthetic resin bottle having a body and a neck finish. The body provides a shoulder extending about the base of the neck finish. Generally, the neck finish is elongated and may have a first collar extending thereabout adjacent the shoulder. The neck finish also has at least one additional collar extending thereabout adjacent its upper end. The resin in the first collar and in the remainder of the neck finish thereabove is substantially unoriented.

Generally, the neck portion has a thread formation thereabout above the at least one additional collar, and the first collar may be provided with lugs configured and dimensioned to cooperate with a child-resistant cap which engages therewith. Desirably, the first collar has an upper portion of substantially the same diameter as the other collar and a lower portion of larger diameter. The upper portion may have circumferentially spaced lugs to provide engagement with a child-resistant cap. Preferably, the other collar comprises a pair of axially spaced rings adapted to seat a carrier arm or gripper therebetween.

In the method for making the synthetic resin blow molded bottles, a synthetic resin preform is injection molded with a

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generally tubular body portion and a neck finish. The neck finish will generally have the first collar adjacent the body portion and a second collar adjacent the upper end portion of the neck finish. The preform is heated and placed in a blow mold cavity having a body receiving portion and a neck finish receiving portion which includes a recess extending thereabout and seating the first collar therein. The additional collar is disposed outwardly of the mold cavity and seats on the upper surface of the mold.

The body portion of the preform is blown into conformity with the walls of the body portion of the cavity to provide a blow molded synthetic resin bottle having a body and a neck finish.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a bottle with an extended neck finish embodying the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a side elevational view of the preform to produce the bottle of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary view of the preform for the bottle of FIG. 1 seated in a blow mold shown in section;

FIG. 4a is a diagrammatic top view of preforms being fed on a pair of rails into, and seated in, an infeed wheel;

FIG. 4b is a diagrammatic side view of the preforms being moved along infeed rails to the infeed wheel and a spindle about to be inserted into a preform;

FIG. 5 is a diagrammatic view of the preforms being carried on spindles through a heating chamber;

FIG. 6 is a diagrammatic view of the preform disposed in a gripper and the spindle being withdrawn therefrom;

FIG. 7 is a diagrammatic illustration of the preform being deposited in the mold by the gripper; and

FIG. 8 is a sectional view of the mold showing the bottle formed by blowing the heated preform.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Turning first to FIG. 1, a bottle generally designated by the numeral 2 and embodying the present invention has an elongated cylindrical body 10 and an extended neck finish generally designated by the numeral 12. Adjacent the shoulder portion 14 at the upper end of the body 10 is a first collar 16 on the neck finish 12. A second collar generally designated by the numeral 18 and comprising a pair of axially spaced transfer rings 20 is provided adjacent the upper end of the neck finish 12. Spaced above the second collar 18 are thread formations 22 which will engage with cooperating formations on the closure (not shown).

Turning next to FIG. 2, a hollow preform generally designated by the numeral 30 is molded with the desired neck finish shown in FIG. 1 and an elongated, generally tubular body portion 32.

As seen in FIG. 3, the preform 30 is placed in the cavity 34 of a blow mold generally designated by the numeral 36 and the lower portion of the neck finish 12 including the first collar 16 is seated in the mold cavity 34. The cavity 34 has a circumferential recess 38 in which the first collar 16 is seated. The upper portion of the neck finish 12 including the second collar 18 and thread formations 22 are disposed above the mold 36.

In the process of molding the bottle of the present invention as seen in FIGS. 4-7, the molded preforms 30 are fed along rails 50 and loaded into an infeed wheel 40 which is at the same level as the top surface of the mold 36. A spindle nose 42 is moved downwardly into the neck finish 12 of the preform

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30, and it carries the preform 30 through an oven 44 in which it is conditioned by the heat lamps 52. The neck finish 12 is desirably shielded as the preform passes through the oven 44 and the spindle nose 42 is rotated to rotate the preform 30 to provide uniform heating. When the preform 30 exits the oven 44, the neck finish 12 is disposed upwardly. At the end of the oven 44, a gripper 46 engages the preform neck finish 12 between the transfer rings 20 of the second collar 18, and the spindle nose 42 is withdrawn therefrom and moved upwardly. The gripper 46 carries the preform 30 to the mold 36 and deposits the preform 30 in the mold cavity 34 with the second collar 18 being disposed above and seating on the top surface of the mold 36 which is then closed about the preform 30. Following the blow and cool cycle, the finished bottle 2 is removed from the mold 36.

In the illustrated embodiment, the lower collar 16 has a stepped configuration with the upper step being of lesser diameter and providing a pair of lugs 54 which cooperate with a closure (not shown) to provide a child-proof and/or tamper-evident bottle.

As is well known, some resins can be oriented to provide greater strength in smaller thicknesses, and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) resins are widely employed. However, polyolefins and other non-orientable resins are also blow molded.

Since the neck finish must be formed to relatively close tolerances to mate securely and seal with a closure, it is desirable to mold the desired neck finish as a part of the preform. To avoid distortion of the neck finish during the blow molding of the bottle body, most of the neck finish is seated in a closely conforming cavity in the mold so that it will not be expanded during the blowing operation.

To facilitate transfer of the preform from the injection molding machine and proper positioning in the blow mold, the second collar is formed on the neck finish adjacent its upper end. This collar can ride on a pair of rails for movement from the molding station to the blowing station. It is also engageable by a gripper for controlled movement of the preform, and it seats on the mold or in a cooperating recess in the mold cavity.

In the illustrated embodiment, this grippable and positioning collar is provided by a pair of axially spaced flanges and the gripper engages between them. However, a single circumferential flange may be employed, desirably with a groove immediately thereabove to seat the gripper.

Because of the elongated neck finish, this collar and the closure may be encircled by a shrink wrapped band in the filled bottle to create a tamper evident seal.

Thus, it can be seen that bottles with extended neck finishes can be readily produced by providing molds which have a cavity configured to receive the lower portion of the elongated neck finish including a collar spaced closely to the shoulder on the body of the bottle. The upper or second collar is positioned to be disposed above the upper surface of the mold, and the protruding upper portion of the neck finish is within the vertical clearance provided in most conventional blow molding equipment.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for making a container, the method comprising:

providing a molded, plastic preform including a closed body, a neck located between the closed body and an open end, and a first and second collar and thread formation located along the neck, wherein the thread formation is located between the open end and the first collar;

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providing a mold having a body receiving portion and a neck receiving portion, wherein the neck receiving portion includes a circumferential recess;

closing the mold about the preform so that the closed body of the preform is received within the body receiving portion of the closed mold, the first collar of the preform is seated within the circumferential recess of the neck receiving portion of the closed mold, the thread formation is located outside of the neck receiving portion and the closed mold, the second collar is seated on an uppermost surface of the closed mold, and a portion of the neck between the first collar and the thread formation is located within and encircled by the neck receiving portion of the closed mold; and

inflating only the closed body of the preform into conformity with walls of the body receiving portion of the closed mold.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising heating the preform prior to said closing.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the preform is rotated about a longitudinal axis of the preform during said heating of the preform.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the second collar is axially spaced from the first collar, a portion of the neck of the preform between the first collar and the second collar is located within the neck receiving portion of the closed mold, and an interior of the neck receiving portion of the closed mold, including the circumferential recess, conforms to the first collar and to the portion of the neck of the preform between the first collar and second collar that extends within the neck receiving portion of the mold.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein more than half of an axial length of the neck is located within the neck receiving portion of the mold following said closing of the mold.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the open end of the preform has a diameter and an axial length of the neck of the preform is greater than the diameter of the open end.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising engaging the preform between the thread formation and the first collar with a gripper to move the preform into the mold.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the preform is held by the gripper during said closing of the mold.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the gripper contacts an outer surface of the mold during said closing.

10. The method of claim 1 further comprising injection molding the preform.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising inserting a spindle into the open end of the preform and rotating the preform with the spindle.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the second collar has a smaller diameter than the first collar.

13. A method for making a container, the method comprising:

providing a preform having a body, a neck located between the body and an open end, and an upper and lower collar located between the open end and the body;

providing a mold having a body receiving portion and a neck receiving portion, wherein the neck receiving portion includes a recess;

heating the body of the preform;

closing the mold about the preform following said heating of the preform such that the body of the preform is received within the body receiving portion of the closed mold, the lower collar of the preform is seated on a bottom of the recess within the neck receiving portion of the closed mold, a portion of the neck between the lower collar and the open end is located within and encircled

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by the neck receiving portion of the closed mold, the upper collar contacts an uppermost surface of the closed mold, and a portion of the preform neck extends outside of the neck receiving portion and the closed mold; and blowing only the body of the preform into conformity with walls of the body receiving portion of the mold to form a bottle.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the upper collar is located between the open end and the lower collar, and the neck receiving portion of the closed mold conforms to the lower collar.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein the upper collar is axially spaced from the lower collar, and a portion of the neck of the preform between the lower collar and the upper collar is located within the neck receiving portion of the closed mold.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein more than half of an axial length of the neck is located within the neck receiving portion of the closed mold.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein the preform further comprises a thread formation located between the open end and the upper collar.

18. The method of claim 14 further comprising engaging the preform between the upper collar and the lower collar with a gripper to move the preform into the mold.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the preform is rotated about a longitudinal axis of the preform during said heating of the preform, said rotating conducted by a spindle inserted into the open end of the preform.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the gripper contacts an outer surface of the mold when the preform is moved into the mold.

21. The method of claim 13, further comprising rotating the preform about a longitudinal axis of the preform during said heating of the preform.

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22. The method of claim 13, wherein the neck of the preform includes a thread formation.

23. A method for making a container from a preform, the method comprising:

providing a preform;

providing a mold having a body receiving portion and a neck receiving portion, wherein the neck receiving portion includes a circumferential recess and a neck cavity section;

closing the mold about the preform such that a closed body of the preform is received within the body receiving portion of the closed mold, a collar located around a neck of the preform is seated on a bottom of the circumferential recess within the neck receiving portion of the closed mold, a thread formation of the preform is located outside of the neck receiving portion and the closed mold, a portion of the preform between the collar and the thread formation contacts and sits on an uppermost surface of the closed mold, and a portion of the neck of the preform between the collar and the thread formation is located within and encircled by the neck receiving portion of the closed mold; and

inflating only the closed body of the preform into conformity with walls of the body receiving portion of the mold.

24. The method of claim 23 further comprising heating the preform, wherein the preform is rotated about a longitudinal axis of the preform by a spindle inserted into an open end of the preform during said heating of the preform.

25. The method of claim 23, wherein the circumferential recess of the neck receiving portion of the mold conforms to the collar, and the neck cavity section of the neck receiving portion of the mold conforms to the portion of the neck of the preform located within the neck receiving portion.

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